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The Pilgrim's Christmas.



BY CORA E. HOWE.



Yours
In His name
Cora E. Howe.

THE
PILGRIMS' CHRISTMAS

BY

CORA E. HOWE

SANDY CREEK, N. Y.

35

Author of

"The Mission of a Little Easter Bud" and
"The Work of Grace."

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"TO THE Y'S OF AMERICA—

WISE, LOYAL AND TRUE—

THIS LITTLE BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR.

MAY THEIR INFLUENCE ALWAYS BE IN
FAVOR OF THE HIGHEST
STANDARD OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER."

PREFACE.

This little story is the result of experience, observation and heart to heart talks of the author with many whose hopes and lives have been blighted because of the existing evil, the liquor traffic.

CORA E. HOWE.

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CHAPTER I.

THE WEDDING. THE JOURNEY. THE RECEPTION.

OOD morning, Miss Perkins! Somehow I can't set myself to work this morning. You know to-morrow is Lylyan Holly's wedding day and I heard yesterday that the father of the young man she is to marry owns a large grape vineyard and that wine is drank as freely as water in the home. I couldn't sleep a bit last night thinking over what that must mean to dear Lylyan. It can not be that the Hollys know of this, for if they did they surely would not consent to the marriage. You know Lylyan met him at college. 'Tis said that he is a fine young man and

that the young woman who weds Clinton Pilgrim gains wealth and position and you know that is a great deal in these days. That is the way the world looks at it, but somehow, ever since I heard about that vineyard and wine in the home I tremble for dear Lylyan's future."

"I wouldn't bother my head about that if I were you, Miss Lawson; time enough to worry when you get to the bridge. Surely Lylyan will never take wine and perhaps the young man does not."

"But he does drink it at home and elsewhere, I am told. It must be she is ignorant of these facts for a stronger temperance girl never lived. Now, Miss Perkins, our conversation must never be repeated, but mark my words, Lylyan Holly will see some dark days."

The cosy little farm house just outside the village of S—— was a scene of unusual merriment the morning of the wedding. Several of Lylyan's college friends

as well as Clinton's were present as this was the first wedding of the class. While there was a feeling of joy, there was one of deep thoughtfulness mingled with sadness as they realized their circle was beginning to break. The young women of the class were very fond of Lylyan, for while in college she gathered them about her every Saturday afternoon for Bible study. They looked upon her as their spiritual teacher and thought she would some day go as a Bible Reader to a foreign land; but Clinton Pilgrim had convinced her that her life should be linked to his.

"He had asked her to give all—
Should he give less?"

Lylyan never looked prettier. She was attired in a simple gown of white, her only adornment being lilies of the valley worn in her glossy black hair, a bunch of the same carried in her hand, and the bow of ribbon white upon her breast. To her young husband she was the fairest among

women. When the hour came that Lylyan must go out from the dear old home where she had lived the happiest of maidens, it was the greatest struggle of her life. As father and mother pressed their loved one to their hearts their grief was too intense for words and the hot, fast falling tears were more than her heart could endure, so tenderly kissing them she slipped from their embrace without a word of farewell. The sound of the carriage wheels but intensified their grief and hurrying away into the library they sought relief from the Book of Life.

“Read, wife, from the comfort chapter.”

Her eyes fell upon these words: “I will pray the Father and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever.”

“Ah! wife, this is for us; our little earthly comfort could not always stay with us so Jesus sends another Comforter who will abide forever.”

Just then the train whistled and going to the door they see Lylyan from the car window waving her handkerchief. Holding aloft the Comfort Book they wave it at her and she passes from their sight. Lylyan, too, had looked to the Comforter and her heart was lighter.

* * * * *

After going a little way on their journey Clinton spied the knot of white ribbon. Said he: "May I ask, Lylyan, what that bow of white ribbon signifies? I noticed it in your latest photograph and wondered then."

"Do you not know, my dear, that is the badge of our Young Woman's Christian Temperance Union?"

"What! Do you belong to that?"

"Most assuredly. Every young woman should. Do you not remember when our society was organized in college?"

"I do remember teasing you about

wearing that knot of ribbon and I thought you left it off."

"I did not wear it on *all* occasions while at college, but since coming home have joined the village Union and now I always wear it." Glancing at the chart and compass on his watch chain she playfully said, "I suppose you will always wear that Masonic badge?"

"Do you think, Lylyan, you can wear it in our circle of friends?"

"Why not? I trust I shall never be ashamed of the great principles back of the little knot of ribbon."

"Do you wish me to understand that wine will be refused by you on all occasions? My mother would think you odd, indeed; she considers it as harmless as milk and serves it freely when guests are present."

Only God knew how the heart of this young bride was pierced as these words fell from her husband's lips but a few



"Bress de Lawd, Mas'r Clinton, dat be de bes
day dis yer o'e heart eber see. I be dar, suah
I will." (See Page 45)

hours after their marriage. Could it be that the man to whom she had just given herself for life had learned to love the wine cup in his mother's home? True, she knew nothing of his home life. She did, however, know that some of the college boys drank wine, little dreaming though that Clinton was among them. As the evening shadows gathered about her they seemed but a symbol of the possible shadows that might come into her life in the coming years. What if father and mother knew that the husband of their only daughter had been taught to drink wine from his mother's hand! Dreadful thoughts were crowding upon her. Could she ever tell them? Ah! never, for the knowledge would bring them to the grave. While musing in the twilight on these awful truths she felt she could not go farther with him whom she loved better than life. Her lips were sealed, but the tears coursing down her cheeks spoke more to him than volumes

of words. He knew he had sorely wounded the heart of his bride and would have given the world could he recall the pain he had caused her, but it was too late, he had deceived her. Could he give up wine? No. It was harmless; his mother had always served it; he would dismiss the thought.

* * * * *

When the carriage stopped before the magnificent mansion of the Pilgrims, Lylyan was overwhelmed as she beheld its grandeur. Clinton had told her very little about his home, and upon entering it she wondered more and more how he came to choose a young woman in her humble circumstances to become his bride. She was, however, soon made to feel much at home amid these elegant surroundings, for the inmates of the home give ease and comfort more than fine tapestries and elaborate draperies. Clinton's parents received her with open hearts for she was

his choice among many attractive young women. The fact that Clinton Pilgrim's bride refused wine at the reception soon became known throughout the village and was the topic of conversation for busy gossips for some time.

A young woman who attended the reception remarked to a friend: "I don't see how any one would dare refuse wine at the home of the Pilgrims. Clinton must have been greatly embarrassed to say nothing of the embarrassment of his proud father and mother. For *my* part *I* don't see how Clinton Pilgrim ever came to marry such a temperance crank. I'm thinking if she lives with him and moves in his circle she will have to give up that notion and leave off that white ribbon, which, 'tis said, speaks her total abstinence principles. She will find her notions won't work in this place. Wine drinking is too popular among the best class for one little woman to have any influence against it. They say she

came from the Neal Dow state. No wonder she is a temperance crank. I felt just awfully for the Pilgrims that night. I dare say she is the first person who ever refused wine in their elegant home. To Clinton's friends she said in that refusal, 'You may not expect wine served at my home.' The gentlemen, I hear, were discussing the matter at the last club meeting, expressing great sympathy for Clinton. I noticed he took more wine than usual. I suppose he did it to drown his humiliation. I imagine his wife will have all the reform work she can attend to in her own home. No doubt she has scruples about dancing and card playing. All teetotalers do have. How Clinton Pilgrim came to marry a woman of such tastes is a mystery. I must admit, though, she has a charming presence. No doubt her college life gave the ease and dignity seemingly so natural. I never looked upon a purer face. I imagine she has always been with her

mother at church and prayer meeting. There surely is something very—how shall I express it? Well, divine about her bearing.”

The young woman to whom all this criticism on the new bride had been addressed, listened attentively and when the speaker had finished, remarked: “Well, Maud, I am glad you have concluded your severe criticism with something in the bride’s favor. To tell you my honest convictions, the little woman completely captivated me by firmly holding to those principles that she believed right. There is not one young woman in a thousand who would not on such an occasion sacrifice principle rather than appear unpopular. The guests must have been impressed with her strength of character. Surely, nothing like it ever happened in this place before. It is a solemn fact, Maud, there is too much wine drinking in our set. I should like to know more about that little

knot of white ribbon she wore. You need not smile, I am getting serious for I believe the time has come when the young women should take a decided stand against wine drinking and I for one am ready to do it."

Maud tossed her head lightly and laughed heartily saying, "I declare, Agnes, you are becoming altogether too serious to stay in our set. I expect the next time I see you you will have on a bow of white ribbon, too. I suppose if Clinton Pilgrim's wife were to remain here you and she would have that white bow on all the girls."

"Now no joking, Maud, think over this matter seriously and I am sure if you do the amount of thinking I have done since the reception you will be ready to don the white ribbon, too."

"It is getting late," said Maud. "I must go," not wishing to prolong the conversation.

"But stay a moment," said Agnes with tears in her eyes, "till you promise me you will give this matter some thought, at least."

Even the tears of Agnes made no impression upon Maud. "No, Agnes, I can make no promises. I think after you sleep again *you* will not be so ready for reform work. Let the missionaries who say they are called to this work attend to it. I, for one, am not called to this kind of work. Why, Agnes! First you know you will be traveling about lecturing in school houses. I imagine you now standing before a well filled school house with that white ribbon on your dress preaching like some minister. I must go. Good night, Agnes. Just forget that white ribbon and begin planning for our next masquerade."

* * * * *

The temperance sentiment awakened in the heart of Agnes soon created a like sentiment among the society young women

of Glenwood, of which she was leader, resulting in an organization whose influence is without parallel.



CHAPTER II.

EDEN HOUSE. WEE PILGRIM.



AFTER several weeks following the reception Clinton Pilgrim and his bride went to their new home in the city of L—— where he had been engaged in mercantile business for two years.

Proud of the home he had provided for his bride, the young husband escorted her through its handsomely furnished apartments with the dignity becoming a king and why should he not, for was not Lylyan his own little queen to abide with him and share this Eden of beauty? Here they would entertain the best of the land and she would be the center of attraction. As they went from room to room she felt

like the Queen of Sheba, who came from a far country to behold the glory of Solomon's temple, and when asked if this met her heart's desire tears of unspeakable joy filled her eyes and looking up into her husband's face she remarked, "I have been thinking of the words of Sheba's queen, 'The half was never told me.' Why did you not choose a bride of wealth and position? This should be the abode of a queen."

"Never, my dear," said Clinton, "speak of this again. A more lovely queen than mine was never born. I count myself the happiest of men to have won a prize like you, and only hope that you will never regret leaving the cosy farm home."

These words meant a great deal to Lylyan. She believed his love for her was stronger than for wine. The wine question had not been discussed since their wedding day. Nothing had ever been said of Lylyan's refusal of it at the

reception. She believed her husband had resolved never to take it again.

The dear old colored servant, Aunt Mandy, who had lived with the Pilgrims since Clinton was five years old, went with Mas'r Clinton to his new home. She had cared for him many years and loved him as fondly as she loved her own little woolly heads that were torn from her breast when she was a slave in the South Land. Her dear old face was a benediction in the home. Although she had been a slave many years and all her dear ones were cruelly torn from her heart, yet her childlike trust in God made her joyous and happy. The plantation melodies she had learned in childhood delighted all who heard her. Clinton was never happier than when his friends were gathered about him with Aunt Mandy to sing and tell stories. She always concluded her stories by saying with a trembling voice, "Ah, chillens, dem was happy days when I libed

in de little log cabin, de sunflowers growin' by de door and de boys and de girls workin' in de cotton and de corn from morn till night. Den when de moon was up and de stars shinin' bright de darkeys all went to de church and sing and pray wid all der might. Oh, my chillens, dem was de bes' days dis yer heart eber knowed and now dey gone till Gabriel blow his trumpet in de mornin'. Den we'll meet togedder around de big white throne neber more to hear de auctioneer poundin' wid de hammer sellin' our own flesh and blood so we can't see dem more."

Four years sped swiftly by. Clinton had paid strict attention to business but spent most of his evenings at the club and was seldom seen with Lylyan at church.

* * * * *

No, baby Pilgrim was not a Christmas baby, for he came the day before. The house was decorated with the choicest

branches of holly that could be found in the city. Even before he came the little nest in which he was to slumber was ready for him, it having been the one his papa used to sleep in. It was of white oak with gilt trimmings. Grandma Pilgrim said it must go with Clinton to his new home and be ready when the wee birdlings should come into the nest. On Christmas morning the nurse decorated it with dainty branches of holly, bringing it into Lylyan's room and placing it beside her, she laid the wee Pilgrim in his own little nest. The proud father imagined his boy would soon need a chair at the table and before the day was over ordered one sent to the house with a tray and knife and fork, telling Aunt Mandy to place them by his plate at the table and to keep the high chair ready for the little Pilgrim to use when his age would permit, which to him seemed no far distant day.

Aunt Mandy declared the baby should

be called Holly for she said: "Dem bright little eyes was as sweet as de holly berry, dem feet an' hands as graceful as de branches dat fluttered on de trees in de breezes and dat he had a right to de name for his mudder's was Holly, de sweetest name in all de airth, des like herself, who allers looks like a lily jest blowed out, so pure and sweet."

All agreed with Aunt Mandy that his name should be Holly. Lylyan was happy with her new treasure and doubly so for since his advent her husband had spent a few less hours at the club. When the new mother felt the first clasp of the tiny fingers she said to herself, "What a good, true woman I must be."

"A partnership with God is motherhood.

What strength, what purity, what self control,
What love, what wisdom should belong to her
Who helps God fashion an immortal soul!"

CHAPTER III.

A CLOUD. EDEN LOST.

HOLLY is now a bright boy three years of age. The pink in Lylyan's cheek has faded and in her face the pitiful story of the heartaches and sorrows of the drunkard's wife are clearly seen. Her husband is so fascinated with club life that his business suffers, but Lylyan little dreams that his late hours mean *more* than card playing and drinking wine with club friends; that he is found among expert gamblers would be knowledge too hard for her to bear. Yes, a cloud has been hanging over the home many, many months.

One evening he came home more under

the influence of liquor than she had ever seen him, greatly agitated and burying his face in his hands weeping. He said, "Oh! Lylyan, everything's got to go. We are undone forever." He had just been playing and lost heavily.

Just then little Holly, who was ready for bed, came running for his good night kiss and said, "Don't cry, papa, everything won't go tause I won't go and leave oo and mamma." Putting his chubby hands on his face said in a tender tone, "Me won't go, papa. Me stay wiv oo."

Lylyan was brave, though she knew not how, and calmly remarked: "My dear, there is great comfort in our darling's reasoning. We can better lose all than him and each other. 'Hope,' you know, 'is an anchor to the soul,' and 'Every cloud has a silver lining.' Let us look for it."

* * * * *

Yes, it was a true picture that Clinton

Pilgrim saw in his delirium. In a few days everything was sold at sheriff's sale and they were soon located at the west end of the city in two small rooms. Aunt Mandy must seek a new home. The one desire of her heart had been to spend her last days with Mas'r Clinton. As she bade them good bye with tears streaming down her old black face she said: "De good Lawd bress yees and may ye never be hungry." Catching up Holly she kissed him over and over and said: "May de Lawd keep ye pure an' sweet, honey."

Lylyan found a friend in Mrs. Washington, the evangelistic superintendent of the W. C. T. U. with whom she had been associated in temperance and church work. And now in those shadowy days she proved a friend in need, helping to secure a class in music for Lylyan, which saved them from suffering, for Clinton had no steady employment; he would secure a position as book-keeper, only to

lose it in a few days because of the wine cup.

Aunt Mandy secured a home near by where she worked for her board and when Lylyan was out giving lessons she came and cared for Holly. He was a very precocious child, nothing escaping his observation. One day as Lylyan came up the walk she discovered their diplomas, or "'plomas" as Holly called them, hanging in each window.

He came running to meet her and said: "See, mamma, how nice your 'plomas look in the windows."

"Yes, my dear, but why did you hang them there?"

His bright, lustrous eyes danced with delight as he said: "You know, mamma, that nice big house on the corner, there's a 'ploma in the window. I guess only one in that house went to college like you and papa, for only one 'ploma is in the window. I guess they want folks to know

that somebody lives there has been to college so they put the 'ploma in the window and I thought you and papa would want folks to know you had been to college so I put them in the window. I guess they are rich folks in that big house for they drive such nice horses and have lots of company. I see nice young men go in there every day. Guess they have banquets there like you and papa used to go to. It is all lit up so pretty, so many pretty big bottles on the shelf. Guess they have camphor in so if anybody has headache they can use it."

Lylyan listened to the little reasoner without explaining that the bottles contained that which caused head and heart aches instead of allaying pain.

He continued: "I guess the man didn't go to the same college you and papa did, for his 'ploma* ain't so large and pretty as yours and there's great big figures in the

*Liquor license.

middle of it. Say, mamma, what is that big eagle* on the corner of the house for? It must cost lots of money. I wish we had one on our house, don't you?"

One morning while Holly was playing upon the street a little boy said to him, "Your papa is a bad, wicked drunkard."

He immediately ran to his mamma broken hearted and told her what he had heard. The shadow had now come into Holly's little life, that dread hour when he must know that his papa was indeed a drunkard.

Often did Lylyan look upon him as he lay quietly sleeping when waiting the home coming of Clinton late into the night and breathed a prayer that he might not inherit the appetite that had mastered his father. She would not fail on her part to teach him that self mastery over one's appetites and desires was the greatest

*The beer sign.

achievement of a life and that it was only obtained by implicit reliance upon God.

One evening Clinton came home more intoxicated than usual. Holly stole quietly to his side and said: "Papa, you ain't a bad, wicked drunkard, be you? Johnnie Hill said you was."

This enraged him and for the first time he gave his little boy a blow across his back with a chair, which laid him prostrate. Lylyan, thinking him dead, screamed and fainted. A neighbor, hearing the cry, came in and immediately summoned a physician. Clinton was at once arrested and taken to jail. Lylyan was soon restored to consciousness but it was feared Holly would not survive; the physician said if he did he would be a cripple for life. On hearing this Lylyan fainted again and for several hours was oblivious to all about her. Hearing her name mentioned by Mrs. Washington at midnight she opened her eyes and faintly whispered: "Is my

baby living. Where is Clinton, oh! tell me!"

When she realized that Mrs. Washington was with her she seemed more quiet. The knowledge of Clinton being in jail again caused her to faint. The physician looked anxiously at Holly, then at the mother, then at Mrs. Washington. The pulse of both was hardly preceptible. The long hours of the night were breathed away in earnest, agonizing prayer by the physician and Mrs. Washington. When the morning light stole in at the window Lylyan awakened out of a deep sleep with a restful look in her eye. Toward evening the little sufferer cried out in his delirium, "Oh! mamma dear, I am here all right. Don't cry, for it wasn't papa that hurt me; it was the club."

Lylyan had told him that no little boy had a better papa than he had until he went to the club, so this thought was constantly running in his mind through

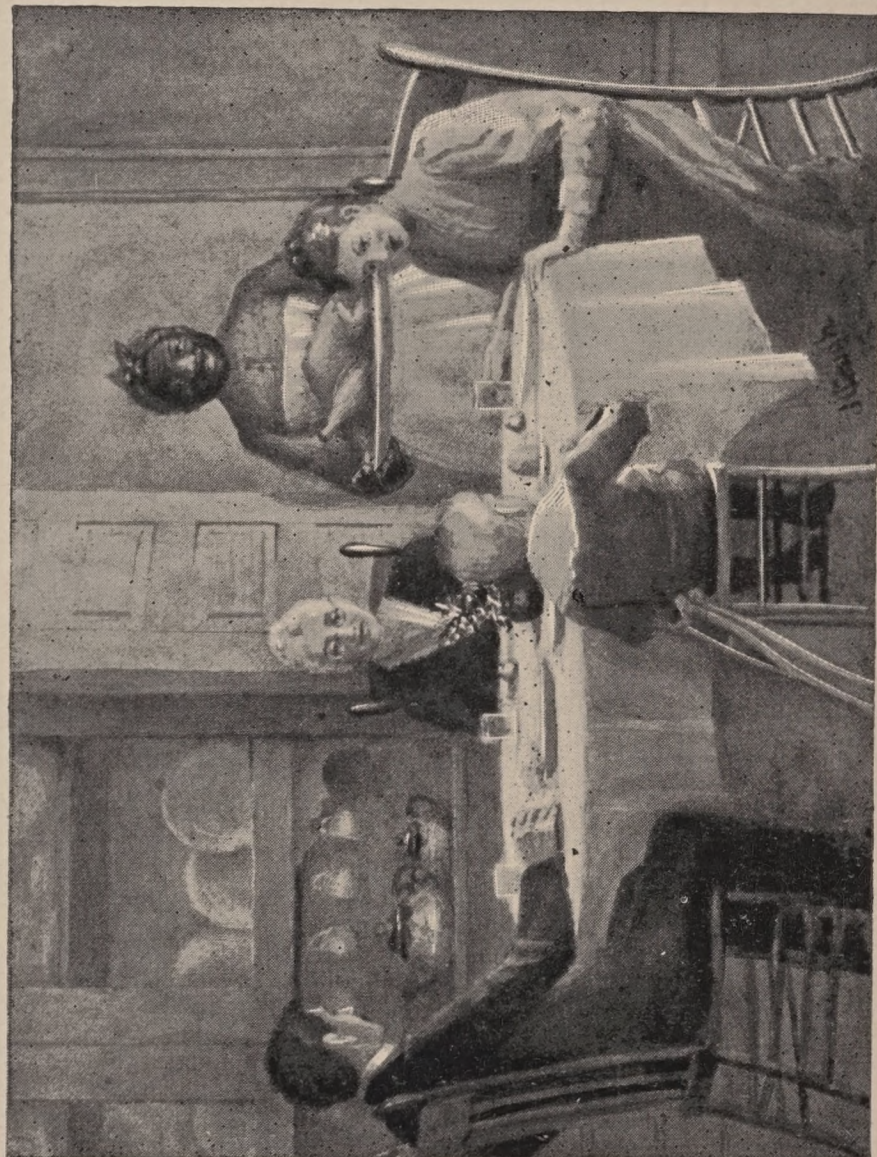
the long weary days of intense suffering. "Tell him, mamma, he didn't kill his little boy. Oh! mamma, can't the clubs be stopped so no more little boys will be hurt by their papas?"

Lylyan began to recover from the terrible shock and in a few days was about administering to Holly. How she longed to see Aunt Mandy during these dark days but she had lost all trace of her, as the people she lived with had moved many miles away.

When the news reached Grandma Pilgrim that Clinton's business and home were gone it was all she could bear, but when she learned of his arrest and of Holly's condition her physician feared that reason would be dethroned. Her husband died the year following Clinton's marriage and after the estate was settled only her home was left.

The question of wine drinking became a very serious one as she lay prostrate in

bed thinking of her only boy in jail brought there, yes, brought there, by taking the first glass at his mother's table. This awful thought so stirred her being that sleep would not come to her eyelids until she had promised God to forever banish wine from her table and had resolved to use her influence against it. But the poor stricken woman lived only a few days; the shock was so great that she had not vitality sufficient to rally. After the funeral expenses were paid there were several hundred dollars left for Clinton. The doctor said Lylyan must move into better rooms where Holly could have the sunlight and they moved into a cosy little house just before Thanksgiving.



(See Page 49)

THE CHRISTMAS DINNER.

CHAPTER IV.

A RIFT IN THE CLOUD. EDEN REGAINED.

 SEVERAL weeks later as Mrs. Washington visits the jail she comes to a man lying in bed seemingly very ill. As she talks with him she discovers that he is passing through deep mental suffering. Taking a seat by his cot she said: "You are very ill, my brother. I have some flowers for you."

They spoke to him of days gone by and caused the tears to course rapidly down his pale cheeks. Kneeling by his side she offered a simple prayer commending him to God, asking Him to take the burden that was weighing so heavily upon his heart. She arose, her face beaming with

a heaven born joy which seemed to carry a message of pardon from the heart of God to this struggling soul.

With tones that carried the message into the depths of his heart she said: "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest." Taking his feverish hand she said: "You can trust Jesus now can you not, my brother?"

Tears of penitence came faster and faster but a change came over his countenance that assured the messenger of an inward peace not to be expressed in words. She slipped quietly away leaving him alone with God who had spoken pardon to his soul. But Lylyan—could he *know* she had forgiven him? Would she ever give him a place in her heart again since that awful night? The dreadful scene was constantly before him, his only boy and Lylyan lying upon the floor apparently cold in death. "*My brother,*" would this new friend call him brother if she *knew all*? *The flowers,*

they were Lylyan's favorite flower. She carried them the day they were wed. He would always keep them. No! he would send them to Lylyan. He would ask her who brought them to search her out, take them to her and plead her forgiveness. Now he could sleep for he saw a ray of hope. In his dreams a new life opened before him—manhood and hope restored, a happy home, Lylyan and little Holly its chief ornaments. In this dream the club had no place but instead he saw himself in the house of God delighting in its services.

As Mrs. Washington approached his room in the morning she remarked: "I see you are much better."

"Yes, I am indeed. The best night's sleep came to me last night that I have had in a long time and I had a very happy dream. Oh, that it were true! If you will listen I will tell it to you, for I know you were sent here to help me. There is a cloud hanging over me that I am sure

you can help remove and let the sunlight into my life."

"I should be glad to listen to your story but I must now hasten to see a dear sorrowing woman whose little boy is very ill, caused by a blow from a drunken father. The little sufferer may now be in heaven."

In an instant the color came into his face, his whole being trembled, great drops of sweat stood out upon his brow. Claspng his hands tightly he exclaimed: "Oh! my God! Do tell me, is it Lylyan? Have I killed my darling?"

Dropping upon her knees Mrs. Washington said: "Let us look to the Father in prayer, my brother. The doctor says the change will soon come."

After prayer he was more quiet. As Mrs. Washington started to leave he handed her the flowers for Lylyan and with tears in his eyes said: "Plead my pardon in His name. Tell her that her prayers are answered, the past is forgiven,

and oh! bring me word that my boy lives."

When Mrs. Washington reached the bedside of the little sufferer the physician and Lylyan were bending over him. The countenance of the physician lightened as he remarked: "There is a ray of hope. Your boy may yet be restored, but to be a cripple for life."

As Mrs. Washington entered Clinton's cell the following morning she found him reading his Bible. His face brightened at the good news but when he was told that Holly must be a cripple for life, a shadow darkened it again. But to know that Lylyan had forgiven him and that in a few weeks he could go home was a joy unutterable.

Several days later Clinton was working in the jailer's garden when, glancing toward the kitchen window, he saw a face of ebony looking out. Suddenly the door opened and behold, Aunt Mandy rushed out before him.

“Lor bress ye, Mas'r Clinton what be ye doin' here, workin's if ye belong here?”

He dropped the hoe and took her extended hand, but could only shed tears which stood like great white beads upon her old black hand.

“Lor sakes! what be the matter wid ye, Mas'r Clinton? Can't ye talk no more? Be ye dumb? How's Missus and de Holly branch?”

The tears came faster and faster. Aunt Mandy wiped her own eyes with a red bandanna, leaving flour in streaks upon her face, for she was mixing bread when she caught sight of Clinton. After some moments he could only say: “I can't tell you all now, Aunt Mandy. It would break your heart to know.”

“Why, chile! be they dead?”

“I thought they were, Aunt Mandy, but they're all right now. When I go home you must come and we'll read in the Good Book and pray together.”

"Bress de Lawd, Mas'r Clinton, dat be de bes day dis yer ole heart eber see. I be dar, suah I will."

The first visit Holly makes after his long confinement is at the home of Mrs. Washington. Returning upon the street car a fine looking gentleman sitting near him remarked: "My little man, how is it that you carry a crutch? I am sorry for you."

The stranger saw at once that there was a sad reason as the color came rapidly to his face and with tears filling his big blue eyes a trembling voice said: "I—wish—you—would—n't—ask—me—mister—for—my—papa—did—n't do it. It was the clubs and the 'plomas you see in the windows in the nice big houses all lit up so bright, where the big bottles shine on the shelf and the big eagle's on the corner of the house where so many boys' papas go."

These strange remarks awakened a deeper interest in the listener's heart. In

a moment Holly's confidence was gained and he was ready to unfold the secret of his little heart to his new friend. Looking straight into his eyes he plaintively said after giving a sigh: "Mister, oh! mister, if you've got a little boy and love him don't go to the club nor to them places where the 'plomas hang in the window and the big eagle's on the corner for you might some time hurt your little boy when you didn't know it as my papa did. But he's been dreadful sorry and sick, too, in a great big house where some men took him cause he hurt me so bad that night and now he loves Jesus and prays to him and Mrs. Washington, the nice lady that wears the white ribbon (I've just been to her house) she goes to places where men stay that have done wrong. She found my papa one day and gave him some flowers and prayed with him and told him Jesus would forgive him and now he is a good man and he's coming home Christmas

morning. We don't live in the nice big house we used to for when my papa went to the club and to them big houses we lost our home and now me and mamma lives in a little house and the nice lady who took flowers to papa brings us things to eat and mamma teaches some little girls how to play on the piano. My Grandma Holly don't know how poor we be, for she'd cry so mamma don't want her to know. My grandpa died when I was so sick and my grandma is coming to live with us for my mamma is all the girl she's got. She's coming before Christmas, too."

His eyes sparkled with delight as he said: "We'll have the splndidest Christmas we ever had. I don't believe mamma'll cry as she did last Christmas for papa came home from the club awful sick and mamma helped him go to bed and he talked in his sleep about men getting his money and woke me up. He looked so queer I was afraid; but mamma says we

must forget all about that, for he won't do so any more. Mrs. Washington says he reads his Bible now and talks with Jesus and my mamma'll be so glad for her papa read in the Bible and talked with Jesus every morning. She said she never would have lived through them awful days when papa went to the club if she hadn't talked with Jesus all the time. Don't you think we'll have the best Christmas in the world. Oh! mister, I wish you'd come, too."

The stranger, who had listened with moistened eyes, resolved that he would have a part in the little cripple's Christmas. When they parted he gave him a ten dollar bill and said: "Take this, my little man, to your mother."

The stranger had not only been a blessing to his confiding little friend, but he had been taught from this heaven sent messenger a lesson never to be forgotten. He never again entered the door of the new club room just opened by the business

men in the city. Giving his card to Holly he told him to call at his office some day with his papa.

To describe Christmas at the Pilgrims' humble home could be done only by the pen of an angel, for human eyes could not look into the hearts of these dear ones united as never before. The Christ child who came to bring peace had cemented these hearts as one. There was more heaven born joy on this memorable Christmas day than had ever been realized when the anniversaries came to them in Eden home. None enjoyed the day more than Aunt Mandy. The turkey given by Mrs. Washington was all she could carry from the oven to the table.

After the family had retired Clinton and Lylyan sat by the fireside in silence; there seemed to be something yet to be said before their Christmas was completed. The door bell rang, a box of lilies of the valley was sent in by wise Mrs. Washington who

well knew they would have a mission. Together they wept over the lilies in silence for some moments. They were living in the buried past. Taking Lylyan's hand in his they knelt by their darling's little bed baptizing his little crutches with their fast falling tears. The moments were too sacred for words. Each seemed to understand it. Heart communed with heart as only those who are taught of the Lord.

After some moments Clinton prayed with trembling voice, choked many times by tears and sobs. "Oh, God! You know all about the past. We want to forget it. You know how cruel I have been to Lylyan and our baby." Here he wept as if his heart would break. "Oh, God! You know how our lives began to grow apart because I would not listen to your voice when I heard you say, 'This is the way, walk ye in it.' Oh, God! You know how I went on in sin breaking Lylyan's heart,"

and wringing his hands in agony he said, "and oh! that last awful deed! Oh, my God! Thou wilt pardon." Realizing as never before as he looked at Lylyan, then upon the face of the little sleeper how he had failed to act well the part of husband and father, he entered into a covenant with the Lord which by His grace he was enabled to keep, though sometimes sorely tested during the remaining years of his life.

The day before New Years Holly and his papa called at the office of their new friend. As a result Clinton was given a position as book-keeper and rendering very acceptable service was finally promoted to a partnership. The life long wish of Aunt Mandy was granted to spend her last days with Mas'r Clinton, who cared for her as tenderly as though she had been his own mother. In a few years Eden home came back to them and here we leave the happy Pilgrims. And but

for the shadow of that awful night their sky would be as clear as the noon day sun.

THE END.

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